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Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company
(Co. No. SC109126) established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.
It incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

PRESS RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01hrs 1st February 2021.

£5,000 reward to protect seals.

Animal Concern is offering a £5,000 reward for information leading to the first successful prosecution under new legal protection for seals which comes into force today.

To avoid having imports of all UK wild caught and farmed fish banned by the United States Government, both the Scottish and Westminster Governments have been forced to ban the killing of seals by aquacultural and commercial fishery interests.

In Scotland this means that from today salmon farmers can no longer obtain a Government Licence to shoot seals. Although they have had five years to prepare for this not all fish farms have installed proper predator exclusion nets and campaigners are concerned some may continue shooting seals.

John Robins, Secretary of Animal Concern, said;

“Most salmon farms are in remote areas and the shooting of seals was never monitored while it was legal and I am sure it will still not be policed now it is illegal. The only successful prosecution of a salmon farmer for killing seals was as a result of one of our campaigns. The farmer involved was fined £200 on 1st August 1989 for using a shotgun instead of a rifle to kill seals at his farm on Skye. That prosecution was only possible because farm workers turned whistle blowers and gave me the evidence needed to gain a conviction.”

“Scottish Government Ministers and officials have bent over backwards to protect fish farmers and keep their persecution of wildlife and environmental damage out of the public eye. Last year there were at least two incidents where Police Scotland officers abused their power to stop campaigners legally gaining evidence of the suffering caused to salmon in these floating factory farms.”

“Fish farms are in remote areas and with Covid restrictions there are even fewer people likely to see what is happening around the salmon cages. Farm workers and local people may be afraid to speak out for fear of reprisals. They can pass information to us in strict confidence and we will take whatever action we can to secure a prosecution. If we obtain a successful conviction we will gladly pay the £5000 reward to the person who supplied the information.”

“Shooting is no longer the cheap option for dealing with seals. Salmon farmers will now have to use some of their profits to create new jobs installing and maintaining the predator exclusion nets we have been asking them to use for the last thirty years. These are expensive but not as costly as a very heavy fine and/or five years in jail.”

END

EDITOR'S NOTES: Some background info here:

https://www.animalconcern.org/Animal_Concern_Press_Release-28-6-20.pdf